

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated October 6, 2003. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Initially, the specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised, and a number of minor editorial amendment are presented in the form of a substitute specification and abstract. No new matter has been added. Also enclosed is a "marked-up" copy of the original specification and abstract to show the changes that have been incorporated into the substitute specification and abstract. The enclosed copy is entitled "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

Next, the claims have been amended to correct minor informalities, and such amendments do not narrow the scope of the claims as originally filed.

Next, on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-3, 8, 9, and 16-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the conventional slasher described on pages 1-2 of the present application in view of the teachings of Lambert et al. (USPN 4,577,476). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

As described in the Background of the Invention, the present invention is directed to a moisture control unit for properly controlling the moisture percentage of the warp yarns. As the Examiner correctly states, the conventional slasher is provided with a moistening device for moistening warp yarns before sizing the warp yarns. The moistening device immerses the warp yarns in water contained in a water tank and squeezes the warp

yarns with squeeze rollers. The problem with the conventional slasher is that excessive moisture is applied to the warp yarns so that the water content in the warp yarns is not appropriate. Thus, the conventional slasher is unable to provide a warp that is moistened at a proper moisture percentage. If the warp holds an excessive amount of water, the warp is subsequently sized at an excessively low size percentage in the sizing process.

The present invention was developed to provide a solution to the problems associated with immersing the warp in the conventional moistening device. In other words, the primary object of the present invention is to achieve a water percentage relative to the warp resulting in a proper size percentage relative to the warp in the subsequent sizing process.

Lambert discloses a finishing apparatus for applying an "atomized" spray solution to a fabric in order to produce a uniformly finished fabric. Note that Lambert device is a solution to the problems inherent with wet pickup finishing accomplished by "spraying, immersion, padding, foam application, engraved roll, kiss roll, loop transfer and knife coating" (see col. 1, lines 9-12). Clearly, Lambert teaches away from utilizing a spraying or sprinkling device in a moistening unit.

In the Lambert device, a chamber 1 is fitted with two spray nozzles that deliver air and solution from a storage tank 24. Additional air is supplied to chamber 1 through manifold 3 which is located below the spray nozzles 2. The additional air increases the velocity of the atomized spray particles, and aids in transporting the "atomized" particles through upper opening 5 so as to bring the solution into contact with a fabric 8.

Clearly, the object of the Lambert device (i.e., uniformly applying a solution to fabric) addresses a technical problem that is completely different from that addressed by the present invention, and thus the nature of the problems to be solved are different.

Further, the technical challenge of the present invention is completely new in the field of sizing, and the improvement to the moistening unit would not have been obvious in view of the teaching of Lambert since the teachings of Lambert would have only been applicable to a finishing apparatus. In the conventional device, the finishing apparatus is represented by the sizing unit 5 and a drying unit 6. The moistening unit of the conventional device is not a finishing apparatus, but rather is an apparatus for applying moisture in advance of the warp finishing process. Thus, any application of the teachings of Lambert in the environment of the conventional slasher would be to the finishing apparatus (i.e. the sizing unit). In other words, the Lambert teachings clearly are not applicable to the moistening unit of the conventional device. Therefore, there is no suggestion or motivation to modify the conventional slasher as proposed by the Examiner.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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